

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 0841

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BGEN, US, BU

SUBJECT: POPOV VISIT

REF: A. SOFIA 707; B. SOFIA 816

1. IN ADDITION TO WHAT WE REPORTED REF B ABOUT BULGARIAN ANTICIPATIONS RE POPOV VISIT, FOLLOWING INDICATORS WERE RECEIVED DURING LAST FEW DAYS. (WE HAVE OF COURSE NOT RAISED SUBJECT OURSELVES WITH BULGARIANS.)

A. DURING TALK WITH ZAGORSKI OF COUNCIL OF FOREIGN RELATIONS LUKANOV SAID PLANNING FOR POPOV VISIT IS NOW IN TERMS OF LATTER PART OF JUNE.

B. VICE PRESIDENT SCHMIDT OF MORGAN GUARANTY TRUST WAS TOLD BY LUKANOV THAT BULGARIANS ARE PREPARING LIST OF COMPANIES WHOSE PLANTS POPOV WILL ASK TO VISIT AND WITH WHOSE EXECUTIVES HE HOPES TO DISCUSS CO-PRODUCTION ARRANGEMENTS. AS EXAMPLES HE CITED RCA, ZENITH AND MOTOROLA TO WHOM PROPOSALS ARE TO BE MADE FOR SCHEME WHEREBY US PRODUCERS OF HI-FI EQUIPMENT COULD "RECAPTURE WESTERN EUROPEAN MARKET FROM THE JAPANESE" BY LOCATING PRODUCTION IN BULGARIA.

C. AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR WAS TOLD LAST WEEK BY POPOV THAT HE EXPECTS TO BE GOING TO THE US AT INVITATION OF SECRETARY OF COMMERCE IN LATE JUNE.

2. FOREGOING TENDS TO CONFIRM WHAT WE REPORTED REF A AND PREVIOUS, THAT BULGARIANS REGARD TRIP AS SET IN CONFIDENTIAL

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PRINCIPLE AND ARE AWAITING ONLY PRECISE DATE WHICH THEY

SEE AS JUST BEFORE THE SUMMER VACATIONS. IF SUCH VISIT IS NOT IN THE CARDS WE SHOULD INFORM THEM SOON AND GIVE ALTERNATIVE DATES.

3. AS EXPLAINED REF A, WE BELIEVE THERE ARE STRONG REASONS WHY VISIT SHOULD NOT BE FURTHER DELAYED. THEY ARE POLITICAL (POPOV WAS ALREADY SUPPOSED TO HAVE COME LAST YEAR AND THE INVITATION WAS REITERATED BY SECRETARY DENT, SO THAT FAILURE TO GO THROUGH WITH IT CAN BE REGARDED AS A CALCULATED ACT OF DISCOURTESY) AND ECONOMIC. THE LATTER ARGUMENT IS STRENGTHENED BY WHAT WE HAVE RECENTLY HEARD ABOUT BULGARIAN LISTS, SIMILAR TO THAT MENTIONED PARA 1 B ABOVE, WHICH THEY HAVE GIVEN TO BRITISH DURING THE RECENT NEDEV VISIT, TO GERMANS AND ITALIANS. SINCE THE LIST NOW BEING PREPARED FOR POPOV VISIT COULD INVOLVE SERIOUS BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES HERE, IT WOULD SEEM ONLY NORMAL THAT WE SHOULD PROVIDE AN OCCASION FOR LEADING BULGARIAN DECISION-MAKER IN ECONOMIC FIELD TO EXPLORE THEM WITH US.

4. I HAVE EXPLAINED IN PARA 3 REF A WHY I BELIEVE POPOV VISIT WILL DENOTE NO GREAT ALACRITY ON OUR PART TO BE NICE TO THE BULGARIANS. IT COULD BE BILLED AS A LONG-POSTPONED AND OVERDUE VISIT, WHICH INDEED IT IS.
HERZ

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